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ABSTRACT

One of the working papers in the final report of the Arizona Board of Regents' (ABOR) Task Force on Excellence, Efficiency and Competitiveness, this document discusses how to increase efficiency for advanced placement high school to university articulation. The more able, dedicated component of the high school class will have finished part of the studies normally found at the collegiate level at graduation from high school. It is more efficient if the accepting university recognizes their attainment by not requiring them to repeat a subject already mastered but grants credit toward the requirement for the bachelor's degree. Arizona's universities recognize previously attained academic achievement in four ways, through: the Advanced Placement Program of the College Board, the College Level Examination Program (CLEP); proficiency examinations; and department examination for credit and/or grade. Arizona has participated in the advanced placement program of the College Board for many hears. To achieve the full potential of the program, efforts are needed to: expand the number of schools participating in the program; encourage students to take advantage of credit earned or proficiency demonstrated on entering their collegiate programs, by moving to higher level courses; and encourage the universities to make students more aware of CLEP. ABOR should include references to achieving college credit and/or recognition of proficiency in materials for high school students considering attending one of the universities. The universities should seek to expand the use of the opportunities offered by advanced standing classes in secondary schools and examinations offered by the universities to establish course credit or proficiency. (SM)

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ADVANCED PLACEMENT: INCREASING EFFICIENCY IN HIGH SCHOOL - UNIVERSITY ARTICULATION

ROBERT MACVICAR

For many years it has been recognized that not all students progress through their educational program at equivalent rates. Generally, however, state policy and the desires both of students and their families have favored the practice of completing a full four years of high school attendance. For the more able and more dedicated component of the high school classes, the opportunity to move to higher levels of study has proven to be appropriate to maintain the challenging intellectual environment that this group needs. Hence, at graduation from high school, such students will have completed a segment of the studies normally found at the collegiate level.

It is an obvious efficiency if the accepting university recognizes their attainment by not requiring the student to repeat a subject already mastered and granting credit for it toward the requirements for the baccalaureate degree. The public universities of Arizona recognize previously attained academic achievement in four ways:

- The Advanced Placement Program of the College Board.

  This program, sponsored by the College Board, provides course descriptions and professional consultants to assist high schools in establishing college-level courses. The program, for a fee, administers and grades a culminating examination and provides the results to the student's prospective college. The college reviews the results and grants advanced placement with or without credit. If granted with credit the student can begin study in the respective field at a higher level and apply the credit earned by examination toward the minimum required for the degree. If credit is withheld but advanced placement awarded, only the former privilege is granted. Taking an advanced placement course in high school does not guarantee that college credit or advanced placement will be awarded by the university of first attendance.

- College Level Examination Program.

  The examinations offered by this program, which is also sponsored by

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the College Board, were designated to offer students a means of obtaining college credit for competencies acquired by formal courses, by self study, or from experience.

General examinations are offered in

(1) English Composition;

(2) Humanities;

(3) Mathematics;

(4) Natural Sciences; and

(5) Social Sciences - History.

Subject examinations are offered in over thirty areas and provide for from three to sixteen credits.

- Proficiency examinations.

  These examinations are offered by the respective universities and are designed and graded by the faculty of the department offering the course. No credit is offered but successful completion allows the student to bypass prerequisites and enroll in advanced-level courses in the area in which proficiency is demonstrated.

- Department examination for credit and/or grade.

  All three universities provide the opportunity to "challenge" a course both for credit and a letter grade by taking a special examination. Certain courses are designated as eligible for such examinations but departments are authorized to develop examinations for other courses. The examinations are comprehensive in scope and are usually prepared by a faculty member who regularly teaches the course.

Arizona has participated in the advanced placement program of the College Board on a limited basis for many years. By 1974, however, only 285 students at 24 schools were participating and 337 examinations were taken. By the end of 1988 the College Board estimates that 92 schools will be participating, 2560 students involved and 3260 examinations taken. The growth in Arizona in all three categories of measurement of participation is presented in Table I.

Table I

Comparison of Arizona and National Participation in College Board Advanced Placement Program - 1974-1987

	1974		1987		% Increase	
	AZ	NAT'L	AZ	NAT'L	AZ	NAT'L
Schools	24	3,498	85	7,776	254	122
Students	285	65,635	2,266	262,081	695	299
Examinations	337	85,786	2,885	369,207	756	330

It can be readily seen that Arizona has increased its participation more rapidly during this period than the nation as a whole. There has been a significant increase both nationally and in Arizona during a period in which the number of students eligible to participate has not increased significantly and in many states has declined during the period. In 1987, 1956 students were eligible to take examinations in 24 different subjects. A total of 2885 examinations were taken and 1904 qualified for grades of 3, 4, and 5. These scores at most colleges and universities qualify for college credit. If one assumes an average of 4 credits per examination, a total of 254 FTE student years of credit were earned by the students. Assuming attendance at a

public university in Arizona, this equates to approximately $4,500,000. Since many students attend independent institutions with higher tuition, the actual foregone costs of this effort on the part of schools, students and universities has an even greater value.

The potential saving is obviously much greater since ASU and NAU permit 30 credits to be earned by all types of examinations and UA 60 credits. It is not unusual for highly motivated students to qualify for 16 credits at entrance to the university, thus reducing the cost of attendance to the completion of the baccalaureate by 12.7 percent. If the full potential value of this program is to be achieved, however, efforts will be needed to:

- Expand the number of schools participating in the program
- Expand the number of advanced placement classes offered in those schools that participate
- Encourage students who qualify for entry into these classes to enroll and to successfully complete them
- Encourage students who successfully complete the courses and are likely to achieve an acceptable score on College Board examinations to take them
- Encourage students to take advantage of credit earned or proficiency demonstrated on entering their collegiate programs by moving on to higher level courses
- Encourage the universities and colleges of Arizona to emphasize the advantages of admission with advanced standing and develop appropriate interaction with the high schools of the state to support the program
- Encourage the three public universities to collectively consider their policies on credit or proficiency by examination to permit a more uniform posture to the secondary schools
- Encourage the three public universities to make students more aware of the CLEP program and of credit or proficiency locally prepared examinations

Currently most of the urban high schools of the Phoenix and Tucson metropolitan areas are participating in the Advanced Placement Program of the College Board and are therefore familiar with the benefits conferred both to the schools and the junior and senior students who are eligible to participate. There is, however, wide variation in the degree to which students participate. Twenty-three public high schools outside these two metropolitan areas were involved in the 1986-87 year. The College Board estimates that for 1987-88 an additional 24 schools were added. It is highly likely that many of these are the larger schools outside the Phoenix and Tucson areas.

The creation of a statewide telecommunication network capable of providing services to the schools would permit, further expansion to the remainder of the public high schools of the state.

A total of 27 different courses in 14 different disciplines were offered through the Advanced Placement Program in 1987-88. Of these, all but four (Art Studio/Drawing; Computer Science,

level AB; European History; and Latin) are available in several Arizona high schools. The most popular courses are American History, English Literature and Composition, and Mathematics/Calculus AB.

A number of large high schools have relatively limited offerings and most of the high schools of medium size have very limited participation in the courses they do offer. There is, therefore, a very real opportunity to increase both the range of courses offered and the number of students who choose to participate. The largest number of students in a program in the public sector is 120 at Mountain View High School in Mesa, a participation rate of 14 percent of the graduates. If this level of participation could be achieved throughout the state, there would be very significant economy achieved. There seems to be no obvious difference in the potential at Mountain View and many other suburban high schools that have far less participation by students. What is needed is enthusiastic support at the level of the local Board of Education, the district and school administration.

Some students take advanced standing courses, either in the program of the College Board or others, but do not take the necessary examinations to demonstrate proficiency and earn college credit. There is a substantial fee involved for the Advanced Standing Program of the College Board (currently $53.00), for the CLEP program ($35.00 per examination). For credit by examination, costs vary among the three universities - - $7.50 per credit hour at ASU, $30.00 at NAU, and $21.00 at UA. While relative to the total cost of an equivalent amount of credit earned by class attendance, these charges are, nonetheless, a barrier to participation by students from low-income families. If the state or districts had subsidized the cost of the Advanced Placement examination in 1987, the cost would have been $133,500. This is a small fraction of the cost of state subsidy for an equivalent amount of college credit at one of the three public universities.

Not all students who participate in the Advanced Placement Program attend collegiate institutions in Arizona. However, in 1986-87 1400 students from Arizona asked that their Advanced Placement Test Scores be submitted to in-state institutions, 1307 to the three public universities. Records of the universities do not permit an evaluation of the number of students who received credit or the amount. Participation by students in obtaining credit or demonstrating proficiency after enrollment is likewise not available from the current records but anecdotal evidence suggests that the number is relatively small. The Testing Service at ASU estimates that approximately 200 students a year take tests at their center and that a majority of them ask to have their scores sent to other colleges. The University of Arizona CLEP testing center reported that in the past year 236 persons took tests at that center. Most of the students were students at the University of Arizona. Obviously not all persons taking the examinations achieve sufficiently high scores to earn credit. Nonetheless, the CLEP program is readily available throughout the state and offers an opportunity for able and aggressive students to accelerate their postsecondary education.

A more aggressive effort on the part of Arizona's colleges and universities to promote the use of the Advanced Placement Program of the College Board, the College Level Examination

Program and institutionally developed tests would increase the awareness of the opportunities to accelerate the completion of the baccalaureate degree. To the degree that students do so, they reduce the costs to themselves and their families and increase the efficiency of the institutions they attend, particularly as freshmen.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Arizona Board of Regents should include references to achieving college credit and/or recognition of proficiency in materials prepared by them for high school students considering attending one of the universities of the system.

The three universities should seek to expand the use of the opportunities offered by advanced standing classes in secondary schools and examinations offered by the universities to establish course credit or proficiency. In publications aimed at prospective students, appropriate references should be made to the recognition of advanced standing or honors sections of high school courses in determining eligibility for admissions as freshmen.